

House Engrossed

State of Arizona
House of Representatives
Forty-fifth Legislature
Second Regular Session
2002

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 2035

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

HONORING THE NATIVE AMERICAN CODE TALKERS.

(TEXT OF BILL BEGINS ON NEXT PAGE)

1 Whereas, on December 7, 1941, the Japanese Empire attacked Pearl Harbor
2 and the United States Congress declared war the following day; and

3 Whereas, the military code developed by the United States for
4 transmitting messages had been deciphered by the Japanese and a search was
5 made by United States intelligence to develop new means to counter the enemy;
6 and

7 Whereas, Philip Johnston, the son of a missionary to the Navajos who
8 was familiar with the Navajo language, brought to the attention of military
9 commanders that the extreme complexity of Navajo might make it a valuable
10 military code. Navajo, an unwritten language that has no alphabet or
11 symbols, proved to be an undecipherable code since its syntax and tonal
12 qualities, including its dialects, make it unintelligible to all except those
13 who have had extensive training and exposure to it. Initial tests using the
14 Navajo language as a code demonstrated that the Navajos could encode,
15 transmit and decode a three-line English message in twenty seconds, a feat
16 that took machines thirty minutes to accomplish; and

17 Whereas, the United States government called upon the Navajo Nation to
18 support the military effort by recruiting and enlisting twenty-nine Navajo
19 men to serve as Marine Corps radio operators in 1942. At the time, the
20 Navajos often were treated as second-class citizens and they were generally
21 discouraged from using their native language. The Navajo Marine Corps radio
22 operators, who became known as the "Navajo Code Talkers", developed an
23 unbreakable code using their native language to communicate military
24 messages, and created a dictionary and numerous words for military terms that
25 did not exist in Navajo. By 1945, the number of Navajo enlistees stood at
26 approximately five hundred forty, with around four hundred of those serving
27 as trained Code Talkers; and

28 Whereas, the Navajo language, discouraged in the past, was instrumental
29 in developing the most significant and successful military code of the time.
30 This remarkable code was used extensively throughout the Pacific theater
31 during the war. At Iwo Jima alone, six Navajo Code Talkers worked around the
32 clock, passing more than eight hundred error-free messages in a forty-eight
33 hour period. Use of the Navajo Code was so successful that military
34 commanders credited it with saving the lives of countless American soldiers
35 and in the success of United States engagements in the battles of
36 Guadalcanal, Tarawa, Saipan, Iwo Jima, Peleliu and Okinawa. Much to the
37 enemy's frustration, they were never able to decipher the Navajo Code; and

38 Whereas, the Navajo Code was kept secret by the Department of Defense
39 for twenty-three years after the end of World War II. Following the
40 conclusion of World War II, the Department of Defense maintained the secrecy
41 of the Navajo Code until it was declassified in 1968. Only then did the
42 exceptional sacrifice and valor of these brave and resourceful Native
43 Americans emerge from history. Their skill, speed and accuracy in using the
44 unique Navajo Code remains a feat unparalleled in our nation's military

1 endeavors and the Navajo Code Talkers are deserving of the highest praise;
2 and

3 Whereas, the Navajo Code Talkers distinguished themselves in performing
4 a unique, highly successful communications operation that greatly assisted
5 in saving countless lives and hastened the end of World War II in the
6 Pacific. The United States honored these outstanding citizens by awarding
7 to each of the original twenty-nine Navajo Code Talkers, or a surviving
8 family member, a gold medal on behalf of Congress and to each person who
9 qualified as a Navajo Code Talker, or a surviving family member, a silver
10 medal on behalf of Congress; and

11 Whereas, New Mexico has honored the Navajo Code Talkers, who subjected
12 themselves to the most intense elements of combat at the time, and it is only
13 fitting that this state does the same; and

14 Whereas, at least seventeen Indian tribes have been identified as
15 having served as Code Talkers during World War I and World War II. These
16 tribes include the Oklahoma Choctaw, the Lakota-Dakota, the Sioux, the
17 Commanche, the Hopi, many of whom served in the 223rd Battalion, the Sac and
18 Fox Tribe of Iowa, the Choctaw, the Assiniboine, the Seminole Tribe of
19 Florida and the Muscogee Creek tribes. All Native American Code Talkers have
20 performed an important service to the preservation of democracy, and they are
21 deserving of long overdue recognition.

22 Therefore

23 Be it resolved by the House of Representatives of the State of Arizona, the
24 Senate concurring:

25 1. That the Members of the Legislature recognize the outstanding
26 contributions of the Native American Code Talkers to the success of the
27 United States military during World Wars I and II and honor these remarkable
28 individuals for their exceptional bravery and patriotism.

29 2. That the Secretary of State of the State of Arizona transmit copies
30 of this Resolution to the Navajo Nation and to the news media of Arizona.

PASSED BY THE HOUSE MARCH 27, 2002.

PASSED BY THE SENATE APRIL 23, 2002.

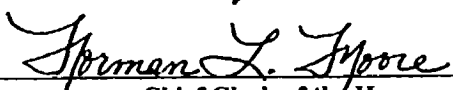
FILED IN THE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE APRIL 24, 2002.

Passed the House March 27, 20 02

by the following vote: 56 Ayes

0 Nays, 4 Not Voting

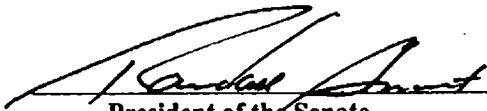

Speaker of the House


Chief Clerk of the House

Passed the Senate April 23, 20 02

by the following vote: 28 Ayes

0 Nays, 2 Not Voting


President of the Senate


Secretary of the Senate

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT OF ARIZONA
OFFICE OF SECRETARY OF STATE

This Resolution was received by the Secretary of State

H.C.R. 2035

this 24 day of April, 20 02

at 11:05 o'clock A. M.


Secretary of State